

thus till difficult to see with the naked eye. I was wondering how it was all going to end and whether the exhausted bird would again collapse and drop to earth, as seemed imminent. After a couple of minutes during which the spiralling bird was being blown about in the wind high above, I lost sight of it behind some treetops and was unfortunately unable to follow it further. It seems difficult to explain this extraordinary episode. The bird seemed quite demented. Could it be that it lost an eye in the recent encounter with its pursuers, and this was the natural reaction?

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#### 7. EGGS OF THE CROW-BILLED DRONGO, *DICRURUS ANNECTANS* (HODGSON), FROM BURMA

Two clutches of eggs collected by H. C. Smith in the plains of the Shweli drainage, Prome District, would appear to constitute the first breeding record for the Crow-billed Drongo, *Dicrurus annectans* (Hodgson), in Burma, if they prove to belong to this species (Smythies 1953). These clutches are now in the collection of the British Museum (Natural History) (B. M. nos. 1953-3-197; 1953-3-198), and have been critically compared with clutches of eggs of *D. annectans* and of other drongos. Smith's (1943) own notes on them were: ' . . . I collected several clutches of drongo's eggs all of the same type—white characteristically streaked with purple. I believe these are the eggs of this bird, they all differed markedly from the eggs of other drongos.'

It was possible to examine a large series of clutches of the eggs of the Dicruridae. Those of *D. annectans* appeared to stand apart by reason of their predominantly streaked patterns. The eggs of most species showed spots or blotches on buff or brown eggs. A careful examination of the eggs of species other than *D. annectans* revealed only two clutches in which the markings tended to be streaks rather than spots. These were clutches of *D. hottentottus*, one from Fohkien, China, and the other from Maymyo, Burma. Both clutches were of white eggs with a light pattern of very pale grey and purplish markings, mostly spots, but the larger tending to form elongated streaks. Apart from the fact that streaks were present they did not bear a

very close resemblance to the clutches of *D. annectans* that were examined. Out of twenty clutches of *D. annectans* in the Museum collection sixteen showed a predominantly streaked pattern, the remaining four clutches being more spotted and having a closer resemblance to the eggs of other *Dicrurus* species. Of these sixteen, eight clutches showed mainly purplish streaking on a white ground, two showed purplish streaking on a buff ground, four had shorter and more red streaking on a buff ground, and two showed heavy elongated red and purple streaks on a buff ground producing a pattern that was strikingly similar to that of the eggs of the Paradisaeidae. Baker (1933) comments: 'nine out of ten clutches (of *D. annectans*) can be recognized at a glance by the longitudinal character of the markings, a feature found in the eggs of no other member of the Dicruridae'.

Although some eggs of *D. hottentottus* may resemble those of *D. annectans* in pattern there is a difference in size. Baker (op. cit.) gives the averages of two hundred eggs of the former species, and one hundred of the latter:

	average	maxima	minima
<i>D. hottentottus</i>	29.2 × 21.2	<u>34.5</u> × 22.0, <u>31.0</u> × <u>22.8</u>	<u>25.0</u> × 20.5, <u>27.5</u> × <u>19.8</u> mm.
<i>D. annectans</i>	26.3 × 19.4	<u>29.5</u> × 20.0, <u>26.5</u> × <u>20.2</u>	<u>24.1</u> × 18.4, <u>27.0</u> × <u>18.3</u> mm.

The two clutches of two eggs collected by Smith measure: 25.4 × 19.2, 24.3 × 19.1; 25.5 × 18.4, 25.7 × 18 mm. These agree with the eggs of *D. annectans* in size.

The eggs of Smith's first clutch are white and marked with a fine pattern of purple and purplish grey streaks, running longitudinally, and generally distributed but with a tendency to have a denser zone of markings radiating outwards at the larger end. The second clutch also has a white ground colour but the markings are larger and sparser. They are longitudinal streaks of reddish purple, violet, and grey, with many heavy markings 3-5 mm. long and about 1 mm. in width. There are some smaller and finer markings but these are fewer than in the other clutch. There is again a tendency for a concentration of markings at the larger end. These eggs are virtually indistinguishable from some of the eggs of *D. annectans* taken in Assam by Baker. From the evidence of size, colour, and pattern, it would appear that the eggs